

LET'S EXPLORE

SCHOOLEYS MOUNTAIN



Mill race coursing along main street in Flanders lends 19th Century air to the Morris County town. Flanders Methodist Church is in left background.

By **JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM**



Deep pools in stream gushing down mountain near Pleasant Grove offer good wading.

SCHOOLEYS MOUNTAIN would have been settled eventually, because the broad plateau atop the 16-mile range in Morris and Hunterdon counties was rich farmland, but the bubbling mineral springs found by the Indians unquestionably hastened its development. The braves who climbed the slopes to drink the healing waters left a trail which has been followed ever since.

That trail was the main route west for hundreds of emigrants after the Revolution and iron miners used it to haul their ore from the mountain. It was well-traveled by the time builders of the turnpike from Morristown to Easton chose it as their right-of-way in 1806. The springs had even more far-reaching effects, however. After the turnpike was finished an entrepreneur sold the fashionable and the wealthy on the restorative powers of the mineral waters and for a century the mountain was a prime resort community. Today the hotels are gone and the springs are hard to find but Schooleys Mountain still is richly worth a visit.

ROUTE 10 is the direct approach to the northern tip of Schooleys Mountain. The highway dips sharply down near Succasunna, passing a dude ranch on a lake to the right. A railroad track is crossed and seven-tenths of a mile beyond a left turn is made into Hillside avenue to start today's exploration.

The mountain is off to the right and jutting through the trees can be seen some of the towers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., where short-wave telephone messages are received from Europe and Central America.

Beyond, a small white building surrounded by white birches marks a deep abandoned sand pit. Green-hued water contrasts with the fine white sand below while across the pit a heavy growth of pine trees frames a long-range view of the mountain. Sand from this pit was once used in iron-puddling furnaces.

The road swings down toward tree-hidden Flanders, where only the spire of the Methodist Church peeps through the leaves. Flanders has an attractive mid-19th Century appearance, with a mill race coursing along the road to an old three-story mill. The road bears left along the race and left again to the 146-year-old Flanders Inn, where a right turn is made.



Scene along winding road in valley along the east slope of Schooleys Mountain, between Bartley and Naughtright.



About 150 feet after making the turn a cluster of apple trees in the field to the left surrounds a neglected cemetery. Stones bearing the names "Stark" and "Read" indicate it was probably a family plot, although some local residents believe it to be an Indian burying ground.

A RIGHT TURN is made at Route 31, under the Central Railroad bridge, then left to Bartley. Central's tracks often cross or parallel the road down the valley and serve as a reminder of the days when as many as 100,000 persons a year traveled on chartered trains to excursions at Nolan's Point on Lake Hopatcong. Now only freight is carried. A sagging station in Bartley, where the road swings right to follow the track, remains from bygone passenger days.

The South Branch of the Raritan River, prettily edged with weeping willows, completes a perfect rural picture in Naughtright. Some of the state's oldest stone houses are in this valley between Naughtright and Long Valley. To the right, just before the road intersects with Route 24, several well-preserved old stone fences hem in grazing fields. Old-timers recall when such stone fences predominated in this area, but the road builders of 30 years ago came through and appropriated most of the stones.

Route 24 carries directly into Long Valley and over the mountain. About 100 feet before the center of Long Valley an old stone house on the left commands attention. Bearing the date 1774, the house is known as "The Fort." Mrs. Edith Collins, who has lived all of her life in the building, says the name probably came because narrow openings at the top of the two-foot-thick walls were thought to be gun slits.

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NEWARK SUNDAY NEWS

Abandoned sand pit near Succasunna, product of which was used in iron puddling furnaces. Green-hued water fills bottom and contrasts with fine white sand. Schooleys Mountain is in background.



Surrounding ruins of one of first churches in Long Valley are headstones with German inscriptions marking graves of Valley's early settlers.

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LET'S EXPLORE— Schooleys Mountain

(Continued from Preceding Page)

AFTER crossing the Raritan River in Long Valley, the next street to the right leads to the ruins of an old church surrounded by early gravestones. Most of the stones carry inscriptions in German, harking back to 18th Century days when Germans came and named the area German Valley. World War I patriotism changed that to Long Valley.

The road winds tortuously up Schooleys Mountain as it rises 450 feet in less than two miles before leveling off at Springtown, where one of the state's many "jug taverns" once was located. Old histories explain that a jug tavern was one where the owner kept one jug under the counter. Regardless of the order (rye, bourbon or Scotch) everything was poured from that jug.

At the top of the mountain a left turn is made to Pleasant Grove. Until World War I this corner was the center of the world-famed Summer resort. Two great hotels, the Dorincourt and the Heath House, welcomed those attracted by the mineral springs and the cool mountain air. The hotels are gone, except for a few foundation stones of the Dorincourt on the left at the corner.

SOON after heading for Pleasant Grove the motorist gets his scenic dividends as he overlooks the beautiful Musconetcong Valley to the right. As the road begins to slant down beyond Pleasant Grove corner, a rock fence along the road to the left warns that a sharp left turn is to be made into the road

paralleling the bed of the rocky creek below. A driver should shift into low gear to make the turn, since the road almost doubles back on itself.

Now the route is back up over the mountain through a seldom-visited section of Hunterdon County. The roads vary from good macadam to fair dirt and gravel and sometimes they are narrow but the motorist will find they are good for anything but high speed driving.

AFTER following the creek up the mountain, a right turn is made at the top. Then, at the next intersection, continue straight on the dirt and gravel road to a left turn just beyond the church. Near here is the highest point in Hunterdon County. At the foot of the hill a few buildings are clustered and a board announces "This Is Anthony." Signs now point the way to Wood Glen, where a sparkling white former stage coach tavern dominates the neat corner. Wood Glen once was known as White Hall, where an early owner of the tavern painted the building white after first having permitted it to become noticeably dilapidated.

The route continues across to Bunnvale, where a right turn is made to the 324-acre Voorhees State Park with its good picnic facilities. If picnicking holds no allure, the motorist can continue into High Bridge to Route 30, or make a left turn at Bunnvale to return home by way of Long Valley. The latter offers an additional opportunity to study Schooleys Mountain and to enjoy one of the state's finest valleys.

Road winding down Schooleys Mountain in the directions of Wood Glen in Hunterdon County (above) is typical of scenery to be found during course of tour outlined in this week's explorer's map.